

United States District Court
Southern District of Texas
FILED

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FEB 22 2021

for the

Southern District of Texas

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk

United States of America

v.

Maria Estela SUPRISE, YOB: 1958, USC
Yolanda PEÑA, YOB: 1967, USC**SEALED**

Case No.

7:21-mj-0387

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of 02-14-2018 and 08-02-2018 in the county of Hidalgo in the
Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Offense Description

Title 18 U.S.C. 1956 (h)

The defendants did conspire knowing, property involved in a financial transaction represents the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity (SUA), conducts/attempts a financial transaction designed to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of the proceeds of SUA or to avoid a transaction reporting requirement.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attachment "A".

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Alfonso Perez Jr, DEA Special Agent

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 2/22/2021 @ 5:00PMCity and state: McAllen, Texas

J. Scott Hacker, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

USMS. MCALLEN TX
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Attachment A

On or about February 9, 2018, a DEA confidential source (CS) was contracted by a drug trafficker to arrange the pick-up of approximately \$63,500.00 in United States Currency in Austin, Texas, and additional currency in Houston, Texas, to be delivered to McAllen, Texas. A DEA Undercover Agent (UC#1) conducted the money pick-ups in Georgetown, Texas, and Houston, Texas, and traveled to McAllen, Texas.

On or about February 14, 2018, UC#1 delivered \$83,420.00 USC, in drug proceeds, wrapped in rubber bands and concealed within a shoe box, to Yolanda PEÑA in a private office located on the second floor of STBS. When PEÑA met with UC#1, she asked "what did you bring," then stated "I hope it doesn't have a lot of five (5) dollar bills like the last time. It took a long time to count, and I don't have a money counting machine," all spoken in the Spanish language. PEÑA informed UC#1 that the total was \$83,220, which was \$200 less than was brought in, and UC#1 stated "Make sure you wash your hands, because you all know where this money comes from.... it's dirty," and PEÑA acknowledged and laughed, all was spoken in the Spanish language. Later that same date, PEÑA called UC#1 about a discrepancy with the amount of money, due to a \$200 difference in what should have been counted, and PEÑA stated "the next time you come, you will not leave here until you and I have agreed on the final count," spoken in the Spanish language.

On or about July 31, 2018, a DEA confidential source (CS) was contracted by a drug trafficker to arrange for the transportation of approximately forty (40) kilograms of methamphetamine to Dallas, Texas. DEA agents conducted a controlled delivery using sham bundles that appeared to contain the methamphetamine. A DEA Undercover Agent (UC#2) delivered the sham narcotics to four (4) individuals in Dallas, Texas and received approximately \$75,000.00 USC. Of that amount, \$20,000.00 USC was owed for transportation fees and the remainder was to be transported to South Tex Beauty Supply (STBS) in McAllen, Texas. After the exchange, the four (4) individuals were arrested and the sham narcotics were seized. UC#2 was instructed to call "Yolanda".

On or about August 2, 2018, UC#2 delivered \$55,489.00 USC, in drug proceeds, wrapped in rubber bands and concealed within cardboard box, to Maria Estela SUPRISE and Yolanda PEÑA in a private office located on the second floor of STBS. While M. SUPRISE and PEÑA counted the currency, utilizing a money counter machine, M. SUPRISE advised UC#2 that it was easier to do "business" if UC#2 utilized money orders. M. SUPRISE further advised UC#2 to purchase multiple money orders, in different locations, in amounts between \$500.00 to \$1,000.00 USC, and that by doing this it would minimize suspicions. After the amount was confirmed by M. Surprise, UC#2 departed the business. During the delivery, M. SUPRISE made several comments about having to be careful about the count because if it was wrong there could be dire consequences. The amount was confirmed by M. SUPRISE before UC#2 exited the business.

This delivery was directed by a known drug trafficker, who was believed to be in Mexico at the time of the communications. The monies delivered on August 2, 2018 to M. SUPRISE and PEÑA was a financial transaction that required that M. SUPRISE and or PEÑA obtain information regarding the identity of the individual from whom the cash was received, person on whose behalf the transaction was conducted, description of transaction and method of payment. Agents have conducted a financial investigation into the business accounts of STBS and have learned that large sums of cash are deposited almost daily. Data base checks determined STBS has never filed any Forms 8300 for transactions where the business received more than \$10,000 in cash in one transaction or in a series of transactions. This would be consistent with hiding the identity of the owners of the proceeds.